

Appl. No. 10/821,523
Amtd. Dated August 23, 2005
Reply to Office Action dated August 11, 2005

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An article stowage system for stowing substantially flat articles in vertically juxtaposed relation, the flat article stowage system comprising, in combination:
 - a slide support assembly-receiving base, the slide support assembly-receiving base comprising an upright-engaging surface, a support-engaging surface, and a substantially linear, assembly-receiving slot linear assembly-receiving slot, the assembly-receiving slot being formed intermediate the upright-engaging surface and the support-engaging surface, the assembly-receiving slot comprising two opposite, substantially parallel spring member-engaging surfaces and a slide member-receiving portion, the slide member-receiving portion being formed intermediate the spring member-engaging surfaces and the support-engaging surface, the spring member-engaging surfaces having a first distance therebetween, the slide member-receiving portion comprising a wedge-shaped cross section, the slide member-receiving portion thus comprising a substantially planar inferior slot surface and two opposite, superior slot surfaces angled from the inferior slot surface to the spring member-engaging surfaces;
 - a first slide support assembly, the slide support assembly comprising a substantially planar article-engaging upright, a substantially linear slide member, a

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substantially V-shaped spring member, spring member attachment attaching means, and slide member attachment attaching means, the article-engaging upright comprising an outer upright surface, an inner upright surface, and an inferior upright surface, the slide member comprising an upright attachment end, a slide surface end, a rounded superior slide surface, a substantially planar inferior slide surface, and a spring member-receiving groove intermediate the upright attachment end and the slide surface end, the V-shaped spring member comprising a vertex region, two opposite spring wings, a superior spring region, and an inferior spring region, each spring wing comprising a wing terminus, the wing termini having a second distance therebetween when the spring member is in a first equilibrium position, the first equilibrium position defined by the second distance having greater magnitude than the first distance, the slide member attachment attaching means fixedly attaching the upright attachment end to the article-engaging upright, the slide member being substantially orthogonal to the article-engaging upright, the spring member attachment attaching means pivotally attaching the vertex region to the outer upright surface, the inferior spring region received in the spring member-receiving groove, the spring wings extending toward the slide surface end, the wing termini being orthogonal to the upright-engaging surface; and

a substantially planar select support structure, the select support structure being positioned opposite the inner upright surface in substantially parallel relation thereto, the slide member being received in the slide member-receiving portion, the superior slot surfaces being substantially tangent to the superior-slide surface, the inferior slot surface being in slidable contact with the inferior slide surface, the wing termini being in

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unidirectional contact with the spring member-engaging surfaces when in a second equilibrium position, the second equilibrium position defined by the second distance having substantially equal magnitude as the first distance, the inferior upright surface slidably engaged with the upright-engaging surface, the spring member thus allowing the slide support assembly to translate toward the select support structure given a first friction-overcoming force directed toward the select support structure orthogonal to the outer upright surface, the spring member thus preventing the slide support assembly to translate toward the slide surface end given a load force directed toward the slide surface end orthogonal to the inner upright surface, the spring wings being compressible to a third equilibrium position for eliminating unidirectional contact between the wing termini and the spring member-engaging surfaces to allow the slide support assembly to translate toward the slide surface end given a second friction-overcoming force directed toward the slide surface end orthogonal to the inner upright surface, the third equilibrium position defined by the second distance having a magnitude less than the first distance, the article support system thus enabling a user to stow articles adjacent the slide support assembly-receiving base intermediate the select support structure and the inner upright surface.

2. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 1 wherein the spring member attachment attaching means is defined by a hitch pin clip.
3. (original) The article stowage system of claim 1 wherein the select support structure is selected from the group consisting of a user-selected wall and a second slide support assembly, the second slide assembly being structurally identical to the first slide

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assembly and positioned such that the inner upright surfaces oppose one another for stowing articles therebetween.

4. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 3 wherein at least one slide support assembly comprises spring member compression compressing means, the spring member compression compressing means for maintaining the spring member in the first equilibrium position.
5. (original) The article stowage system of claim 3 wherein at least one slide support assembly comprises a pliable spring member jacket, the spring member jacket being fastened about the superior spring region for increasing contact area between the wing termini and compressive forces applied thereto.
6. (original) The article stowage system of claim 1 wherein the superior slot surfaces, the inferior slot surface, the superior slide surface, and the inferior slide surface are polished for reducing friction, the spring member-engaging surfaces are unpolished for increasing friction, and the wing termini are pointed for enhancing unidirectional contact with the spring member-engaging surfaces.
7. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 4 wherein the spring member compression compressing means are defined by a spring-compressing cap, the spring-compression spring-compressing cap comprising a spring-receiving notch and cap attachment attaching means, the spring-receiving notch being defined by opposite notch

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walls, the notch walls for retaining the spring member in the first equilibrium position, the superior spring region being received in the spring-receiving notch, the cap attachment attaching means fixedly attaching the spring-compressing cap to the outer upright surface.

8. (currently amended) An article stowage system for stowing substantially flat articles in juxtaposed relation, the article stowage system comprising, in combination:

slide support assembly-receiving means, the support assembly-receiving means comprising a substantially planar upright-engaging surface and a substantially linear, slide support assembly receiving slot linear slide support assembly-receiving slot, the slide support assembly-receiving slot being formed adjacent the upright-engaging surface, the slide support assembly-receiving slot comprising first and second substantially parallel spring member-engaging surfaces and a slide member-receiving portion, the slide member-receiving portion being formed adjacent the spring member-engaging surfaces, the spring member-engaging surfaces having a first distance therebetween, the slide member-receiving portion comprising a slot surface extending from the first spring member-engaging surface to the second spring member-engaging surface; and

first and second slide support assemblies, each slide support assembly comprising a substantially planar article-engaging upright, a substantially linear slide member, a substantially V-shaped spring member, spring member attachment attaching means, and slide member attachment attaching means, the article-engaging uprights each comprising an outer upright surface, an inner upright surface, and an inferior upright surface, the

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slide members each comprising an upright attachment end, a slide surface end, a slide surface, and a spring member-receiving groove intermediate the upright attachment end and the slide surface end, the V-shaped spring members each comprising a vertex region, two opposite spring wings, a superior spring region, and an inferior spring region, each spring wing comprising a wing terminus, the wing termini having a substantially uniform second distance therebetween when the spring members are each in a first equilibrium position, the first equilibrium position being defined by the second distance having greater magnitude than the first distance, the slide member attachment attaching means fixedly attaching the upright attachment ends to the article-engaging uprights, the slide members being substantially orthogonal to the article-engaging uprights, the spring member attachment attaching means pivotally attaching the vertex regions to the outer upright surfaces, the inferior spring regions received in the spring member-receiving grooves, the spring wings extending toward the slide surface ends, the wing termini being orthogonal to the upright-engaging surface, the slide members each being received in the slide member-receiving portion, the inner upright surfaces being opposite one another, the slot surface being in slidable contact with the slide surfaces, the wing termini being in unidirectional contact with the spring member-engaging surfaces when in a second equilibrium position, the second equilibrium position defined by the second distance having substantially equal magnitude as the first distance, the inferior upright surfaces slidably engaged with the upright-engaging surface, the spring members thus allowing the slide support assemblies to translate toward one another and preventing the slide support assemblies to translate away from one another, the spring wings being compressible to a third equilibrium position for eliminating unidirectional contact

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between the wing termini and the spring member-engaging surfaces, the third equilibrium position defined by the second distance having a magnitude less than the first distance, the third equilibrium position thus allowing the slide support assemblies to translate away from one another, the article support stowage system thus enabling a user to stow articles adjacent the slide support assembly-receiving means intermediate the inner upright surfaces.

9. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 8 wherein the slide support assemblies each comprise spring member compression compressing means, the spring member compression compressing means for maintaining the spring members in the first equilibrium position.
10. (original) The article stowage system of claim 8 wherein the slide support assemblies each comprise a pliable spring member jacket, the spring member jackets being fastened about the superior spring regions for increasing contact area between the wing termini and compressive forces applied thereto.
11. (original) The article stowage system of claim 8 wherein the slot surface and the slide surface are polished for reducing friction, the spring member-engaging surfaces are unpolished for increasing friction, and the wing termini are pointed for enhancing unidirectional contact with the spring member-engaging surfaces.

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12. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 9 wherein the spring member ~~compression~~ compressing means are defined by a spring-compressing cap, the spring-compression caps comprising a spring-receiving notch and cap ~~attachment~~ attaching means, the spring-receiving notches each being defined by opposite notch walls, the notch walls for retaining the spring members in the first equilibrium position, the superior spring regions being received in the spring-receiving notches, the cap ~~attachment~~ attaching means fixedly attaching the spring-compressing caps to the outer upright surfaces.

13. (currently amended) An article stowage system, the article stowage system for stowing articles in juxtaposed relation, the article stowage system comprising:

substantially planar assembly-receiving means, the assembly-receiving means comprising a slide member-receiving slot, the slide member-receiving slot comprising first and second substantially parallel spring member-engaging surfaces and a slide member-receiving portion, the slide member-receiving portion being formed adjacent the spring member-engaging surfaces, the slide member-receiving portion comprising a slide member-engaging surface extending from the first spring member-engaging surface to the second spring member-engaging surface; and

at least one slide support assembly, the slide support assembly comprising an article-engaging upright, a slide member, a spring member, and component ~~attachment~~ attaching means, the article-engaging upright comprising an outer upright surface and an inner upright surface, the slide member comprising an upright attachment end, a slide surface end, and a slide surface, the spring member comprising first and second spring

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ends and a spring body intermediate the first and second spring ends, the spring ends being substantially orthogonal to the assembly-receiving means, the component attachment attaching means attaching the upright attachment end to the article-engaging upright and the spring body to the outer upright surface, the slide member being received in the slide member-receiving portion, the slide member-engaging surface slidably contacting the slide surface, the spring ends being cooperatively associated with the spring member-engaging surfaces for allowing the slide support assembly to translate in select directional movement.

14. (original) The article stowage system of claim 13 wherein the select directional movement is selected from the group consisting of unidirectional movement and bidirectional movement.

15. (original) The article stowage system of claim 13 where in the article stowage system comprises a substantially planar select support structure, the select support structure being positioned opposite the inner upright surface in substantially parallel relation thereto, the article support system thus enabling a user to stow articles adjacent the slide support assembly-receiving means intermediate the select support structure and the inner upright surface.

16. (original) The article stowage system of claim 14 wherein the select support structure is selected from the group consisting of a user-selected wall and a second slide support

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assembly, the second slide assembly being structurally identical to the first slide assembly and positioned such that the inner upright surfaces oppose one another for stowing articles therebetween.

17. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 15 wherein at least one slide support assembly comprises spring member compression compressing means, the spring member compression compressing means for maintaining the spring member in a first equilibrium position.
18. (original) The article stowage system of claim 15 wherein at least one slide support assembly comprises a pliable spring member jacket, the spring member jacket being fastened about the superior spring region for increasing contact area between the spring ends and compressive forces applied thereto.
19. (original) The article stowage system of claim 13 wherein the slide member-engaging surface and the slide surface are polished and the spring member-engaging surfaces are unpolished.
20. (original) The article stowage system of claim 13 wherein the spring ends are each pointed for enhancing unidirectional contact with the spring member-engaging surfaces.
21. (currently amended) The article stowage system of claim 16 wherein the spring member compression compressing means are defined by a spring-compressing cap, the spring-

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compression cap comprising a spring-receiving notch, the spring-receiving notch being defined by opposite notch walls, the notch walls for retaining the spring member in the first equilibrium position, the superior spring region being received in the spring-receiving notch, the component attachment attaching means fixedly attaching the spring-compressing cap to the outer upright surface.